High Level Committee with the objective of formulating a tariff policy as envisages under section 13(e) of the ERC Act.

Setting-up Gas-based and Thermal Power Plants in Assam

859. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of gas-based and thermal power plants proposed to be set up in Assam;

(b) the steps taken by Government to expedite the completion of these plants in the State; and

(c) by when these plants are likely to become operational ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA) : (a) to (c) The Lakwa Waste Heat Recovery Project (1×38 MW) has been included in the capacity addition programme of Assam during the 10th plan. The project does not require Techno-Economic Clearance (TEC) of Central Electricity Authority (CEA) as the cost of the project is less than the limit prescribed by the Government for appraisal of projects. The project can be commissioned within 21 months from the date of placement of order on turn-key basis. CEA's comments on the technical and cost aspects have been communicated to the Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB).

Completion of hydro-electric projects

†860. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have emphasised the need for completing the hydro-electric projects within a period of four years and every possible assistance has been assured by the Ministry in this regard;

(b) whether any direction has been issued in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA) : (a) to (c) With the object of reducing the time and cost over-run of hydro projects so far as they relate to inadequate investigation and non-availability of proper infrastructure in terms of access roads and land, the Government has introduced a three stage clearance process for development of new hydro-electric porjects in the Central Sector. The progress of important porjects in the Central, State and Private Sectors is also reviewed by

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the Government from time to time to cut delays in their implementation and remedial measures taken for their timely completion. As each hydro project is unique in its own way keeping in view the site conditions, the hydrological data and the extent of civil engineering, it may not be possible to fix a uniform time frame for implementation of different hydro-electric projects. However, efforts are being made by National Hydro-electric Power Corporation Ltd. that execution of hydro electric projects is achieved in less than five years from the date of insvestment approval.

MoU signed between India and U.K. in Power Sector Reforms

861. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and U.K. have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in London to promote power sector reforms;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which it is likely to augment the power ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA) : (a) to (c) During the visit of the Minister of Power to U.K. in the last week of June, 2002, a MoU was signed between India and U.K. for cooperation in the power sector. The MoU, *inter alia,* envisages establishment of a Joint Power Sector Working Group to promote and facilitate reforms in the power sector. It also envisages sector related studies, exchange of experts and other forms of cooperation in the power generation, transmission and distribution. The MoU also speaks of cooperation in the filed of power by sharing information, experience and best practices.

Unifying Programmes for Wasteland Development

862. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to bring all of the programmes relating to wasteland development under one umbrella;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the efforts made by Government in this regard;

(c) whether the task force constituted to examine the private sector participation in the development of wastelands in the country has submitted its report;